



North Devon Council
Environmental Policy
2020

The purpose of this Policy is to establish North Devon District Council's environmental commitment for the next 10 years. It covers all of the Council's activities and estate. North Devon District Council is a large employer and a significant resource user and we therefore recognise that our operations and service delivery have a significant impact on the environment.

In addition to fulfilling our statutory environmental responsibilities and complying with all legal and other requirements, including a commitment to a Carbon Neutral District by 2030, we will use our powers and influence to further protect and improve the environment, while encouraging and supporting others to do the same.

We will invest in the carbon literacy of the members and staff of the Council and work in partnership with stakeholders to achieve the objectives of this policy. The policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

We will:

Aim to become carbon neutral as an organisation by 2025, (including those arising from our purchasing of goods and services)

- Reduce the consumption of energy and water across all of our activities
- Minimise the impact of our travel¹
- Improve our performance to prevent all types of pollution and reduce CO² and other harmful emissions from our activities.

Minimise the production of waste from our own activities and adhere to the principles of the waste hierarchy.

¹ The Council's Climate Action Team commit to only meeting in locations accessible by public transport or virtually using video conferencing) and by developing more sustainable travel solutions where it is unavoidable

- Require our suppliers and contractors to reduce the impact of their goods and services by considering whole life cycle impact.
- End our consumption of single use plastics.

Ensure environmental risks and opportunities are managed positively.

- Protect, conserve and enhance our District's built heritage by encouraging environmentally sensitive development through good planning policies and approaches to listed buildings and conservation areas and the effective application of building regulations.
- Protect, conserve and enhance our District's high quality natural environment and its biodiversity whilst improving our parks and open spaces, public rights of ways and green corridors.

Support a District wide programme with the aim of making North Devon carbon neutral by 2030, going on to be significantly carbon negative by 2045.

- Support the most disadvantaged in our community to respond to the challenges of climate change.
- Plan and adapt the District to build resilience to adverse weather and climate change risks.
- Support the community in the reduction of waste and adherence to the principles of the waste hierarchy.

In order to achieve this, we will operate an environmental management system² that will be integrated into the corporate management framework to:

- Apply to all activities undertaken by North Devon District Council, including contracted out services as new contracts are negotiated.
- Set objectives and implement action programmes in order to minimise the negative environmental effects and increase the positive effects of our activities.
- Develop procedures for training, monitoring, summarising, and reporting of environmental performance information to ensure continued organisational improvement through review and revision.

² Approach to an environmental management performance system to be agreed by the Working Party for recommendation to Strategy and Resources Committee.

Appendix 1

North Devon District Council became a signatory to the Devon Climate Declaration on 24 July 2019:

Devon Climate Declaration

1. This Declaration has been prepared by a consortium of public, private and voluntary organisations collaborating through a Devon Climate Emergency Response Group. It sets out an ambition to tackle climate change that covers all of Devon, including those people who live, work in and visit our county, and those businesses who are based or operate here.
2. We are aware of the significant implications of climate change for Devon's communities; it is already affecting our environment, infrastructure, economy and health & wellbeing. If not addressed, the impact on future generations will be profound and the ability to meet the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals will be severely compromised.
3. We understand that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has advised that carbon emissions must reduce globally by at least 45% by 2030 from 2010 levels and reach net-zero by 2050 if we are to avoid the worst effects of climate change by keeping warming below 1.5 degrees.
4. We will lead in the global response to climate change through our collective action, innovation and influence.
5. Individually, we will review (within 6 months) our plans to reduce our organisation's carbon emissions to meet or exceed these targets, including ensuring the people we do business with are doing the same. We will publicly report our carbon emissions annually in accessible formats.
6. In collaboration, we will engage Devon's residents, businesses and visitors to develop and implement a plan to facilitate the reduction of Devon's production and consumption emissions to meet IPCC recommendations at the latest. We will openly report progress on its delivery. We know this transformational change will be challenging and will include:
 - Deploying more renewable, decentralised and smart energy systems
 - Retrofitting energy-efficiency measures into our existing buildings
 - Constructing zero-carbon new buildings

- Travelling less and using improved walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure more often, and using electric and hydrogen vehicles
 - Changing our consumption to use less, re-use more and choose low-carbon options
 - Challenging all economic sectors to review their practices and the values of those they do business with
 - Divesting from fossil fuels
 - Changing our dietary patterns and reducing food waste
 - Changing agricultural practices to reduce emissions associated with farming operations, manage soils sustainably and replenish soil carbon
 - Encouraging carbon storage such as through tree planting, the use of wood in construction and peatland restoration
 - Empowering the people of Devon with the knowledge and skills to act collectively.
7. Additionally, we will work to understand the near-term and future risks of climate change for Devon to plan for how our infrastructure, public services and communities will have to adapt for a 1.5-degree warmer world.
8. Local organisations and communities cannot do this alone as the national government plays a key role in many of the policy areas that are vital to reducing emissions and adapting to climate change. We call on the government to prioritise decarbonisation and adaptation within decision making and work with us by using its powers to provide the resources and funding necessary to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon and resilient economy and society.
9. We challenge every organisation, business, community and individual to do the same.